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LETTER DATED 24 APRIL 1995 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I am writing to you concerning the letter of Mr. Mate Granić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, addressed to you on 13 April 1995 (S/1995/301, annex), and, upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to state the following.

In an attempt to disguise the deep involvement of its regular army in the military operations against the Serbs in the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) and in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as its flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 713 (1991) on the arms embargo in the former Yugoslavia, Croatia continues with absurd and malicious accusations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In addition, Croatia is stepping up its military preparations in order to re-launch large-scale military operations against the UNPAs. By constant provocations and amassing its military equipment, Croatia is unilaterally breaching the agreement that it reached with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula, with the obvious aim of dragging the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the war, thus dangerously threatening peace and security in the whole region.

By employing such unfounded allegations, Croatia obviously wishes to discredit the constructive role of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the search for a lasting, just and comprehensive peaceful settlement to the crisis in the territories of the former Yugoslavia. Such attempts by Croatia fit the regular pattern it has always resorted to on the eve of important events and adoption of major decisions by the Security Council. This time it coincided with the activities of the Security Council concerning the resolution on the extension of the partial suspension of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia once again categorically rejects all absurd allegations contained in the letter from Mr. Granić that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been allowing shipments of military equipment across its border.

In its clear-cut conclusions contained in its reports, the Mission of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia has repeatedly confirmed that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is complying fully with its own commitment to close the border with the Republic of Srpska except for humanitarian assistance, foodstuffs and clothing. By levelling false charges against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia, together with some other countries, obviously questions the credibility of the 18-country Mission of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, in an attempt to exert pressure on the Security Council not to extend the suspension of the sanctions.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to the regular military activities of the Croatian regular army which are in direct contravention not only with the peace efforts of the international community but also with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The tolerant approach of the Security Council towards such activities on the part of Croatia threatens to jeopardize the ongoing peace efforts and the past achievements.

Since 1992, around 8,000 Croatian regular troops (four brigades: the 115th, 116th, 156th and 163rd) have been engaged on a regular basis in the area of eastern Herzegovina. Since the beginning of this year, an additional three brigades of the Croatian army (4th, 7th and 126th), totalling around 3,000 soldiers, have been deployed in military operations in the area of Livno and Grahovo. Consequently, the Croatian army is, at the moment, engaged in offensive operations with seven brigades totalling 11,000 soldiers, 30 tanks, 20 armoured vehicles and 40 artillery pieces.

Parallel with the military engagement of its troops, the Government of Croatia constantly supplies the Bosnian Croat army (HVO) with military equipment. HVO itself has about 50,000 soldiers, 60 tanks, 70 armoured personnel carriers and around 500 artillery pieces of varying calibres. The HVO units have been organized in 42 brigades concentrated in four areas - Grude, Tomislavgrad, Vitez and Orasje.

The Croatian regular army forces together with HVO and Muslim forces are currently waging offensive operations against the army of the Republic of Srpska in the regions of Grahovo, Glamoc and in the Kupres-Sipovo direction. Assisted by HVO troops, the Croatian army occasionally targets the positions of the Republic of Srpska army from the Orasje bridgehead and in the Stolac-Nevesinje direction.

From the area of Bosansko Grahovo and Glamoc and across Mt. Dinara, that is, from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as from the Drnis direction, the Croatian army frequently makes incursions in the areas of the Republic of Serb Krajina which are under United Nations protection. According to the latest United Nations reports, Croatian forces deeply penetrated into the UNPAs, 20 kilometres from Knin.

The above-mentioned activities of the Croatian regular army are striking examples of Croatia's flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions 752 (1992), 757 (1992) and 787 (1992), as well as 713 (1991) on the arms embargo.

As a result of the failure to take effective measures to prevent arms embargo violations by Croatia and some other countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina is replete with arms, which certainly cannot contribute to ending the war or restoration of peace, but rather to feeding the military ambitions of the extremists on all sides.

Instead of tolerating further such Croatian activities, the Security Council has to respond appropriately and take urgent and effective measures in order to prevent further violations of its own resolutions and erosion of its own credibility.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia urges the Security Council to take adequate steps without delay in order to ensure Croatia's full compliance with the relevant resolutions, thus creating conditions for their strict implementation. Should the further lenient attitude of the Security Council towards Croatia's flagrant violations of its resolutions and its turning of a blind eye towards the engagement of the Croatian army in the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue, it could encourage other countries to follow suit. That would certainly take us even further from the peace settlement and could have unforeseeable consequences for the region as a whole.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.